

before the Senate, will manage that bill. It is an extremely important piece of legislation. We are going to do our very best to complete that bill and then move to Foreign Operations. I don't know how anyone can object to the foreign operations matter because it is hundreds of millions of dollars under what the President requested. It is something that is extremely important. The President feels very strongly about this legislation, and we should move forward on it.

Following that legislation, we are going to move to the reconciliation matter which deals with education. I told my friend, the senior Senator from Kentucky, that we may have to work this weekend, or part of this weekend, the reason being, as I mentioned, we have two appropriations bills, and they should move quickly. We have a statutory time on the reconciliation matter dealing with education.

Next week, everyone should understand we are going to have votes Monday morning—Monday morning. It is a very short week, and we are going to take up next week the Transportation appropriations bill. In light of all the attention focused on the deteriorating infrastructure of this country, that is a very important piece of legislation, and we need to complete it.

The Jewish holiday starts sundown on Wednesday. It was originally my intent to work until sundown on Wednesday, but a number of my Jewish colleagues indicated they have to travel. Especially Senator LIEBERMAN needs to be in Connecticut prior to sundown. So we are going to complete our voting on Wednesday by 1 o'clock. We will work past that time on matters perhaps, if we can complete the Transportation appropriations bill by that time, but we are going to stop voting around 1 o'clock on Wednesday.

Then, of course, we have other business to do. After that, we have to move to the matter dealing with Iraq. We have Defense authorization. I have spoken with my friend, the Republican leader, about different ways we could set up moving forward on that legislation. We don't have anything determined yet, but we are trying to do that. My wish and my desire is to move forward and have a number of votes set up so there are 50-vote margins. We will not ask for that now. I will give the distinguished Republican leader adequate time so we can have a UC dealing with that matter.

I will, during the course of the speech I am going to give today in a few minutes, Mr. President, ask unanimous consent that we can go to conference on SCHIP. I hope we can do that. I have again spoken with the Republican leader about that matter.

Before I get into my remarks, I ask through the Chair if my friend has anything he needs to know or maybe questions I can answer regarding the schedule.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I appreciate the majority leader's call this morning. He basically covered the items he has gone over. We will be cooperating, to the maximum extent possible, to move forward with the work in the Senate. I, such as he, will have an opening statement as we begin this session shortly after the majority leader completes his statement.

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR JOHN WARNER

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I begin my remarks on this fall calendar in a position of wanting to get a lot of business done. But first I wish to make a few remarks about two of our most distinguished colleagues, Senator WARNER of Virginia and Senator KENNEDY of Massachusetts.

A few days ago, Senator WARNER announced he will not seek reelection when his term ends, which is in 2008. JOHN WARNER's career in public service began when he was 17 years of age when he enlisted in the U.S. Navy during World War II. He did not have to enlist. His father was a distinguished physician in Virginia. He did it because it was the right thing to do.

After an honorable discharge, he, again feeling the call of duty, interrupted his law school studies to join the Marine Corps during the Korean war. Keep in mind, both times, when he joined the Navy and then the Marines, we were at war. During the Korean war, he rose to the rank of captain.

JOHN WARNER is a patriot. If you look up "patriot" and "patriotism" in the dictionary, it says one who loves his country and supports its interests. That is JOHN WARNER by definition.

When JOHN WARNER returned home after the Korean war, he was appointed Under Secretary of the Navy and later became Secretary of the Navy before beginning his five terms in the Senate.

His work on the Armed Services Committee is certainly legend. His ability to work with Senator LEVIN has been something I have watched and admired and many times complimented both of them for—their ability to work together, many times on issues that were very difficult to work together on. They always worked together, always looked out for each other.

In addition to the work he did on the Armed Services Committee, I watched firsthand his brilliant work on the Intelligence Committee but very firsthand his work on the Environment and Public Works Committee. From the time I came to the Senate, I worked with JOHN WARNER on that committee. I was chairman of that committee on two separate occasions. During the period of time I worked with Senator WARNER, I was in the majority, and other times he was in the majority. To JOHN WARNER, it didn't matter.

I can remember the first big Transportation bill we did. We did one every 5 years. What a great example he set for everybody as one of the senior

members of that committee. He worked with conservatives, he worked with liberals, he worked with Democrats, and he worked with Republicans.

To show his ability to do the right thing, one needs look no further than his own State of Virginia. There was a hotly contested race for the Senate for the State of Virginia. JOHN WARNER supported the Democratic candidate rather than the Republican candidate. That is the kind of person he is.

I have such great admiration for JOHN WARNER. He is, in my opinion, what a public servant should be. He is a gentleman and has served the people of Virginia and our Nation with distinction for 30 years or more. Senator WARNER's impact on this institution will not be forgotten. I will sorely miss his warmth and friendship. My wife Landra and his wife Jeanne are friends. They have been working together. Every year the Senate spouses have a First Lady's luncheon. Two years ago, my wife was chairperson of that. Last year, she was. They are good friends and we will miss them a lot. They are a wonderful couple. I have to say JOHN WARNER is top of the line. I have so much admiration for him.

SENATOR KENNEDY'S 15,000TH VOTE

Mr. REID. I also want to say a few words about another one of the Senate's most distinguished and legendary Senators, and that is TED KENNEDY. The last day of our session was extremely frantic. We were trying to do certain things. Well, we had a lot we were trying to get finished, not the least of which was the domestic spying measure, which was so intense. So we had a lot of votes during that week, and that day we had votes, but in the rush to close the session a milestone occurred that went unremarked and it should not have. But that is the way things are here in the Senate sometimes. Senator KENNEDY cast his 15,000th vote—15,000 votes. He cast his 15,000th rollcall vote the day we adjourned for summer vacation.

There is very little I can say to fully honor Senator KENNEDY for his 45 years of Senate service. He has been someone whom I have followed so very long. And to think that I have the opportunity to serve with one of the Kennedys is very important to me. My office, right across the hall here, has a letter I received in 1961. Senator KENNEDY had not been inaugurated as yet, but he had been elected and he was working from where we have our Tuesday luncheons, the LBJ Room. That was his office before he became President. He sent me a letter. I was at Utah State University and I formed the first Young Democrats Club in the history of the State. It might not sound like much, but to me it was important at the time and President Kennedy recognized that by writing me a letter.

I am so grateful for the service of the Kennedys and what they have done for

our country. We have had two of Senator KENNEDY's brothers who have been assassinated. He had a brother who was killed during World War II. So Senator KENNEDY deserves more attention than I have given him here today, but I have so much admiration and respect for him for what he has done for me.

He has this great public persona, but for those of us who work with him, he is a man with a lot of humility. He is always willing to step back into the shadows and let others get the attention. His record of speaking for civil rights, education, working people, senior citizens, and people with disabilities is unparalleled. And as to his ability to work together, no one can testify to that more than the current President Bush in the White House. The legislation President Bush has been fortunate enough to pass has been landmark legislation with which Senator KENNEDY has helped him. So I value Senator KENNEDY's wisdom and leadership and, most of all, his friendship, and certainly recognize and congratulate him on his 15,000th rollcall vote.

PAST AND PRESENT CHALLENGES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, August was a time for us to leave Washington for a while, spend time listening to and reconnecting with our friends, neighbors, and constituents back home. Someone this morning on the telephone asked me what I remember most about the August recess, and I said I think it is best represented in an extended conversation I had with someone on the telephone at my home in Searchlight. You can look out my windows and see for miles. There is a range of mountains called Timber Mountains. They do not match the Rockies or the Sierras, but to me they are important. During the summertime, there are storms there all the time. They do not last very long, but they are beautiful to see. I was telling my friend that is what I remember most, talking on the telephone and trying to explain to my friend what I saw out there. We call them cloudbursts. It rains so hard you can't see the mountains, and the lightning is coming frequently. It is beautiful to watch. It is what nature is all about, and that is what I remember most about my trip home this August.

But it certainly was a chance for me, and for all of us, to ignore the pundits and hear from the people of the State we represent. I traveled this past month to many places in Nevada, and the message I heard was very clear: Nevadans want us to do something about the high cost of energy and start reversing the damage that nonrenewable fuels are causing our environment. They want us to help them find affordable health care solutions so low-income kids can get regular checkups, so senior citizens can pay for their medicine, and everyone, rich or poor, can afford health insurance. We are pushing

50 million people with no health insurance. They want us to fight the skyrocketing cost of a college education.

Above all, Nevadans want us to finally bring the war in Iraq to a responsible end. They want us to take our brave troops out of another country's intractable civil war so we can rebuild and refocus our military on the grave and growing challenges we face throughout the world. These concerns are, of course, not unique to Nevada. I know my colleagues are hearing the same warnings in every corner of our country, the same concerns I have heard and more. I want to share with my friends in Nevada and all Americans that we hear you. We share your concerns and your sense of urgency, and we are working every day to reach these goals.

When this new Congress began in January, we knew the challenges ahead of us, but the expectations were even greater than the challenges. We started the year with an ambitious agenda for introducing 10 bills on the first day. Now, as we begin our busy fall calendar, we have made progress on almost every one of those. Coming into the previous work period, we have already sent to the President the first raise in the Federal minimum wage in more than 10 years; the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission, after having been pushed aside for years; the toughest ethics and lobbying reform in history, which today is on its way to the President. We passed a bill to give the hope of stem cell research to millions of Americans who suffer, and we will soon attempt once again to override the President's veto. We believe we are only one vote short of being able to override that veto.

We passed disaster relief for the gulf coast, western wildfires, and farmers who have suffered drought and other disasters. We provided funds for our troops and National Guard with the equipment they need, for example, the Mine Resistant Combat Vehicles, to do their jobs more safely. We passed a bill to finally hold the administration accountable on Iraq with real benchmarks for progress.

We have been able to do a number of important things dealing with Iraq, even with Senator JOHNSON ill. We were sometimes in a minority. One of our colleagues, who is one of the most loyal Democrats we have and have ever had, our nominee for Vice President, the distinguished Senator from Connecticut, Senator LIEBERMAN, votes with the President on the Iraq matters most every time, even though he votes with us on everything else. We were many times in the hole 49 to 50. So what we were able to do was certainly very good. I applaud the few Republicans who helped us. We were able to pass a bill to send to the President that he had to veto.

We also passed a balanced budget which restores fiscal discipline and cuts taxes for working people. Of course, we wish we could have done

more in Iraq, but we did the best we could, with a pay raise and better health care for our troops, who are being asked to shoulder a larger burden than ever before.

This past work period we added to that list other accomplishments: passing the Energy bill, which included, among other things, raising CAFE standards, fuel efficiency, for the first time in 25 years. We haven't sent that to the President yet because we need to work out our differences with the House.

We reauthorized the Higher Education Act to give Americans the largest expansion of student financial aid since the GI bill. As I indicated in my opening statement, we are going to finish that this week and send it on to the House.

Beginning debate on the Defense authorization bill on September 17, we will make critical investments to address troop readiness problems in the military caused by what we believe is mismanagement of our Armed Forces.

These legislative accomplishments will make a real difference for working families, students, senior citizens, and those who protect us at home and abroad. Our progress makes one thing clear: when you put partisanship aside, we can do great things for the American people. But when partisanship divides us, our work suffers.

For all our success so far this year, we have done more than people ever expected. Now, we could have done a lot more than that, but Republicans have sought to block our progress, it seems sometimes at all costs. We could have reduced the cost of prescription drugs, but Republicans filibustered that. We could have passed comprehensive immigration reform, but we only got 12 Republican votes. We could have ensured our troops received sufficient rest and time home between deployments—that was the Webb amendment—but once again we were blocked by most of the Republicans.

The minority has forced 42 cloture votes already this year, many on legislation that wasn't even controversial. I hope the delay and stalling is in the past, and that the minority has proven they can make us go to cloture but it hasn't accomplished anything. I hope we can move forward in a less burdensome manner.

Our progress has been in spite of those efforts. When we have worked together across the aisle, the record speaks for itself. We know it can be done because we have done it already. Today, I reach out to my Republican colleagues on every piece of legislation. I hope and expect the minority will reciprocate so we can move beyond hyperpartisanship and obstruction to keep making the kind of progress the American people deserve. We must do this because the issues we now confront deserve nothing less.

The Senate Appropriations Committee has reported 11 of the 12 annual appropriations bills. We plan to devote